particularly in market access, by developing countries like India should serve to safeguard their food and livelihood security concerns and rural development needs.

On 1st August, 2004, a Framework for Establishing Modalities in Agriculture has been agreed to by consensus in the meeting of the General Council of the World Trade Organisation, which include the US and the EU Member States. The Framework duly addresses India's concerns.

Amendments in Foreign Trade Policy

2951. SHRI B.K. HARIPRADSAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the amendments to the Foreign Trade Policy were expected to be announced on March 31, 2005 and whether this deadline has been extended further;

(b) whether Government is feeling the crunch on account of commitments made in the Common Minimum Programme, leaving little room to accommodate fresh export incentives; and

(c) whether Government is considering curtailment or closure of the existing incentive schemes to accommodate new incentives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) (a) to (c) The annual supplement to the Foreign Trade Policy has been released on April 8, 2005 incorporating additional policy initiatives and further simplifying procedures to facilitate and enhance India's share of international trade. There is no proposal under consideration of Government to curtail or close the existing export incentives schemes. However, DEPB scheme will be replaced by a new scheme which is aimed at neutralizing the un-remitted levies and taxes on exports.

Transition from the DEPS to duty drawback regime

2952. SHRI B.K. HARIPRADSAD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is seriously considering a smooth transition from the Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme (DEPS) to a duty drawback regime free of bureaucratic hassles;